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FIRST OF ITS KIND FROM KERALA

63

- THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS
- LAMAHATTA
- MOROCCAN TABLES
- THE CAPTAIN'S APPRENTICE

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

Installations by REJANI S.R

CULTURAL eMAGAZINE
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Editor's Note

GOLDEN FIBRE ART

Jute in India addressed as the "Golden Fibre" is one of the best material for making exquisite craft items. While jute craft is taken into consideration, One rue-fully reminiscences the illustrious observation of the Mughal emperor about coconut; the same fruit instils a cup of sherbet and luscious fruit! Indeed jute conquers the major arenas of human world of utilitarian artistry.

The usage of Jute as a raw material unfurled its existence in the ancient Indian scriptures namely 'Manu Samhita' and '**Mahabharata**'. Evidence of the trade of jute cloth in the 16th century still whispers from the pages of history. "Ain-i-akbari" (1590) menti-ons sackcloth originating from Bengal.

Early nineteenth century marked an epoch in history with Bengal topping the chart and earning the title of the home of jute handicrafts from India. Jute has strategically placed itself as a status symbol with its characteristic feature of high availability in a develop-ing country like India.

Since the antiquity jute has remained the favo-urite material for its utilitarian and eco friendly quality. With the progression of time, this established form of Jute craft is flourishing in the national and international market. In this issue you can enjoy the stunning art-works of Rajani Senthil.

Happy Reading...!!
Varghese T. Thomas

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The Garden of Earthly Delights

By Agnieszka Nienartowicz >>

The Garden of Earthly Delights

Agnieszka Nienartowicz

What appears to be a photograph of a girl showing off her Hieronymus Bosch-inspired tattoo isn't a photo at all. It's actually an incredible oil painting by Polish artist Agnieszka Nienartowicz. Graduating just four years ago from the Fine Arts Academy of Gdańsk, she demonstrates incredible skill at her craft. This particular painting combines the work of Hieronymus Bosch, a forefather of the Northern Renaissance, with tattoo art for a decidedly contemporary feel.

Interestingly, the piece, which shares a title with Bosch's iconic The Garden of Earthly Delights, was first conceived of in Nienartowicz's own private reflections. With a deep interest in man's internal emotions and conflicts, she found the 15th-century painting as a perfect vehicle to convey her message. >>

The Garden of Earthly Delights

“Humans are full of contrasts and contradictions, they want to do good and instead they do evil,” the artist shares with My Modern Met. “I was thinking about human nature, about sin and the will of evil which are inscribed in our being, like written inside us. And then I connected it with the Bosch's triptych, which speaks of human nature. I love this painting, it is so strange, weird and beautiful at the same time.”

Bosch's figures, expertly painted in oil by the young artist, demonstrate the fall of man, contrasting with the delicate beauty of the young woman depicted. Nienartowicz's work follows a returning trend toward figurative painting in contemporary art. And though treading toward hyperrealism, there is still a painterly touch evident in the canvas. By combining old and new, she strives to achieve the perfection of the Old Masters, while continuing their skillful tradition into the 21st century.

Just what satisfaction does Nienartowicz derive from combining contemporary and historical elements in her paintings? >>

“I love the art of past centuries, the Old Masters, their great thoughts and workshop skills. Often, I am just crushed by their genius.”

Source: My Modern Met

The Garden of Earthly Delights

“I treat each element like any other item, but on the other hand, the historical elements bring a story and an emotional load with them. At the same time, by including them in my paintings, I give them the new context, meaning, and a new life. Maybe it is also a kind of a tribute to the Old Masters?” <>

Lamahatta

A small village is located at an altitude of about 5,700 feet and 23km away from the main town Darjeeling.

Text & Photos
Paulomi Guha

The best way to refresh your mind from all the work stress is to go on a vacation.Mountains are always a great choice to unwind and if those mountains are none other than the Himalayas, the experience becomes more blissful.So we choose an unknown place named ‘Lamahatta’ which is just 23km from Darjeeling. >>

Lamahatta

This place has been developed as an eco-tourism site in the year 2012.The natural beauty of the surroundings and the majestic views of the mountains makes it a Pacific destination.It is known as the honeymooner’s paradise.Lamahatta is a perfect weekend gateway.It stands at an altitude of 17,00m.

The name Lamahatta comes from(Lama-Hatta, which means Lama-Buddhist Monks and Hatta-place of living or home).The main inhabitants of this place are sherpas,tamangs,bhutias and yalmas,dukmas.Earlier it was just a roadside mountain village but later on, with the initiative of the Chief Minister Ms. Mamata Banerjee and the villagers and the forest officers, the village was turned into a perfect eco-tourism destination. >>

Lamahatta

Several homestays have come up run by the villagers.There is a roadside garden that has been created with much love and care.The entry in this garden is done by ticketing which is Rs 10 for each person. The garden is full of beautiful flowering plants and orchids and numerous birds.Long stretches of pine, oak and fir trees can be seen in this garden.

As you enter the garden you could see the colorful flags waving in the winds at one side of the garden.The locals say that the breeze passes through this prayer flags and purify the surroundings as well as the souls of the people.There is a wooden watchtower situated in the garden to get the best possible views around ‘Lamahatta’. >>

Lamahatta

There is a small lake on the hilltop of this garden which villagers consider to be sacred.There are routes that go through these forests by which you can go to the lake in the hilltop.

On a clear day, you could easily see the surrounding ranges, the valley and the Rangit river flowing down and specially the magnificent view of Kanchenjunga.

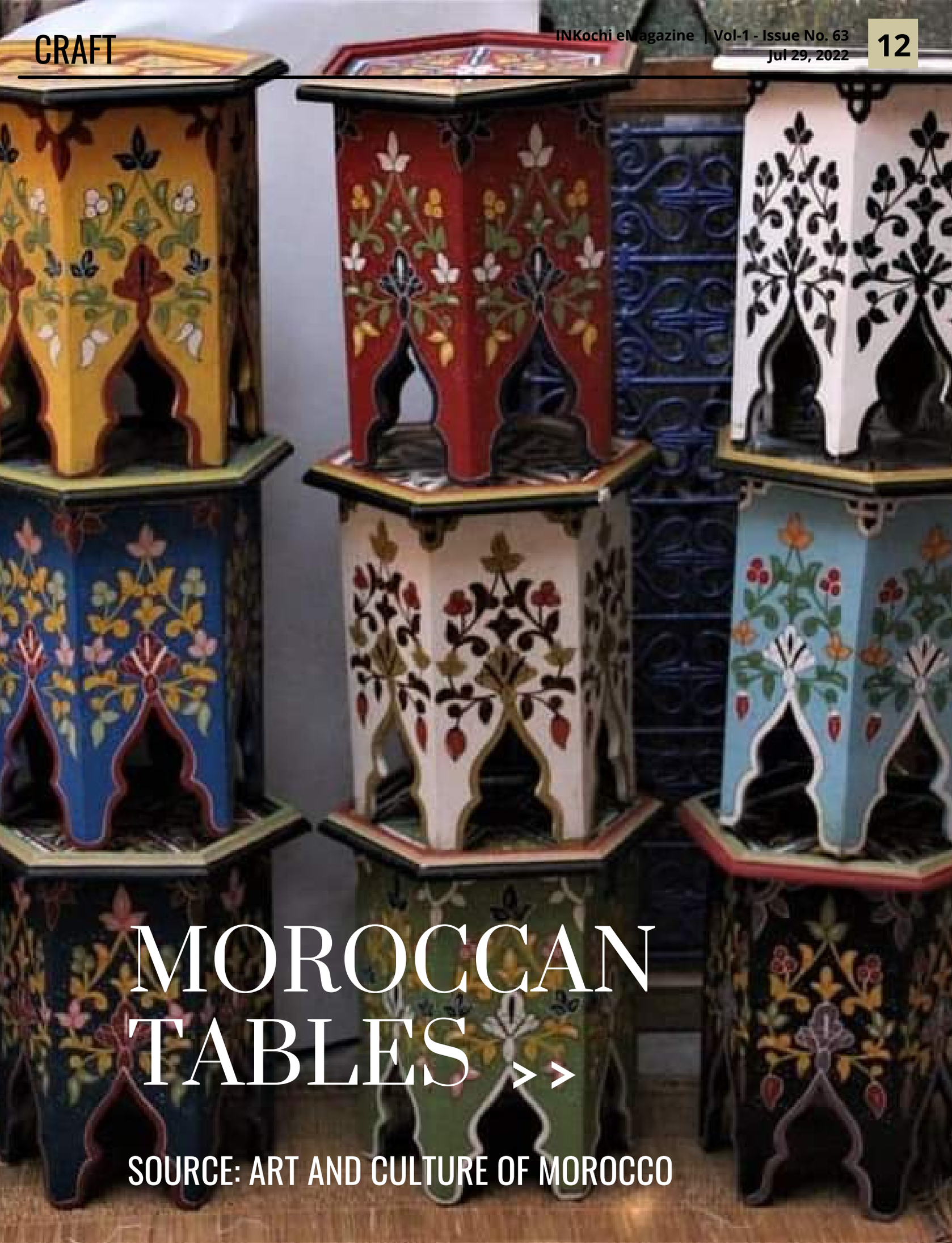
Apart from the plenty of natural attractions, you can also explore some small trekking experiences you can also visit nearby tea gardens which include Glenburn tea estates.

The best quality of lopchu tea and Darjeeling tea are available here.Lamahatta offers an ecstatic atmos-phere for all those people who are seeking for peace away from city life. >>

Lamahatta

How To Reach
It is 72kms away from Siliguri and it will take about 3.5 hours.You have to come to Jorebunglow near Ghoom and then take the road to Lamahatta.You can also take a shared jeep or else a cab to Jorebunglow and another one to Lamahattta.

You can also come from Darjeeling through a cab which is 23 km and from Kalimpong as well which is 41kms. <>



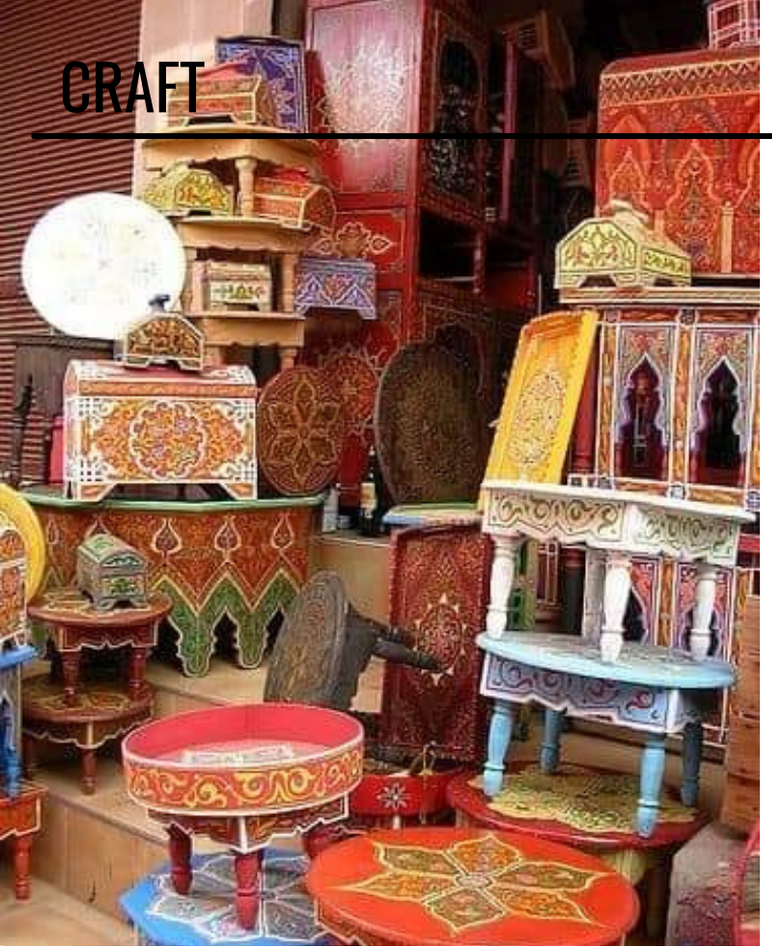
MOROCCAN TABLES >>

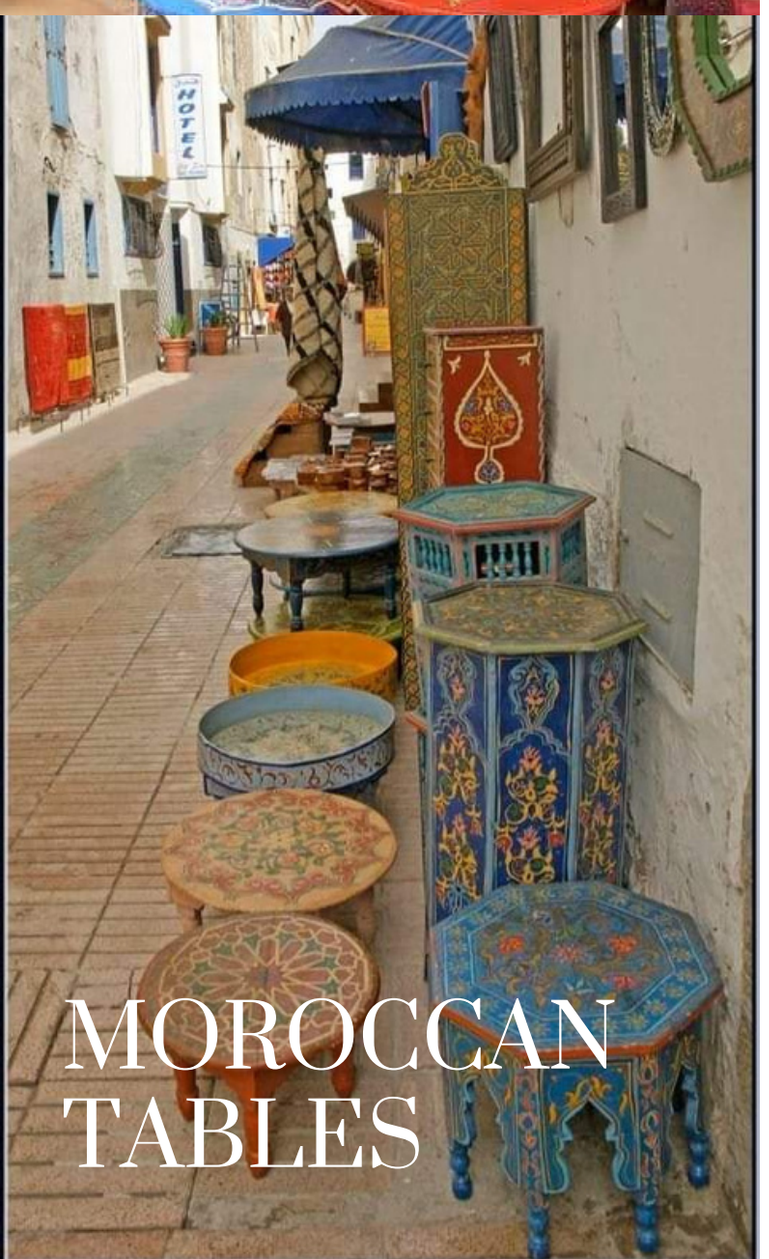
SOURCE: ART AND CULTURE OF MOROCCO

MOROCCAN TABLES

Moroccan furniture is influenced by art and design from a place called Morocco. The country of Morocco sits on the edge of Northern Africa, with coastlines along the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. This location means Morocco has long been a crossroads of cultures and religions, combining influences from Africa, Europe and Arabia.

And note, you might see Moroccan style furniture also called souk style. The name refers to a type of marketplace called a souk found in North Africa and the Middle East. Like Morocco itself, and Moroccan furniture, souks are filled with styles, materials and colors. >>





MOROCCAN TABLES

Several cultures played a role in what we today call Moroccan style. They include the Berbers, a desert people from Northern Africa who were merchants and warriors. They tended toward colorful carpets and elaborate wood carving; and the Moors, Arabs who conquered much of Africa, including Morocco, in the 700s, bringing with them the religion of Islam. More on that in a moment.

The Moors later conquered the Iberian Peninsula, which we know as present-day Spain. This brought to Morocco an influx of Roman and Mediterranean influence, because the Romans had ruled the Iberian Peninsula prior to the Moors' arrival. And in the early 20th century, Morocco became a French protectorate (sort of like a colony), allowing other European elements to enter the mix.

Today, the result is Moroccan style, a fascinating mix of elements springing from this diverse history. It's a distinct blend of color, form and pattern that influences architecture, interior design and furniture design. <>

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

ART SHOULD BE DEMOCRATIC ...

INSTALLATIONS

BY REJANI S. R

INTERVIEW & TEXT

Alicen Jacob

>>>

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From Stasis to Metamorphosis

ART SHOULD BE DEMOCRATIC ...

INTERVIEW & TEXT

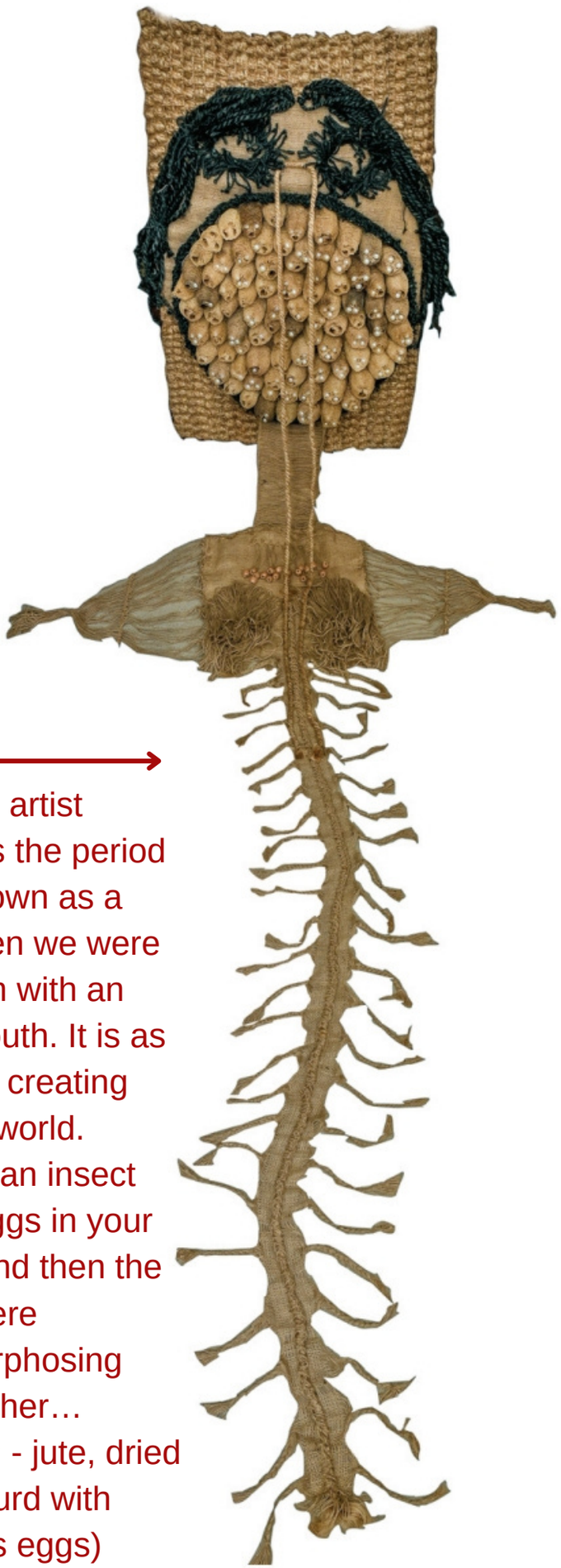
Alicen Jacob

Art is not always about spontaneity. It need not necessarily be something which has been produced at the height of an experience. Rather, it can sometimes sprout from stasis. A stasis marked by slow fossilisation of memories relating to fears, suffering, experiences, one's thoughts and a distant observation of the self and the world around. This, in fact, is the hallmark of the work of the artist Rejani S. R. >>.

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

Growing up as a girl in Trivandrum with no artistic background, Rejani thought that art was about copying the world around. Her perspective, however, changed completely the moment she stepped into the art school. She learned gradually by experimenting with materials, its philosophy, sometimes faltering and at other times tasting victory. “The victory remains with you, in your deep recesses carefully guarded!” says Rejani.

Even while she was experimenting with various materials at college, Rejani could not derive complete satisfaction in the ones she was using. To her the materials represent more than what it stood for superficially. >>



Here the artist imagines the period of lockdown as a time when we were all frozen with an open mouth. It is as if we are creating another world. Imagine an insect laying eggs in your mouth and then the world there metamorphosing into another… (Medium - jute, dried ridge gourd with pearls as eggs)

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

The meaning mattered, the history mattered. So she adopted a technique of collecting different items which are intimate – which spoke to her and slowly incorporated the varied materials, sewing different textures in such a way that it would ultimately evolve in meaning.

The foundation of Rejani's work is jute. The rest of the materials used are unpredictable. This includes threads, ash, sand, clay, even dried vegetables, pearls, midrib of coconut, cow dung, etc. The reason why she uses jute is because it provides her satisfaction, unlike other materials. "A spectator looks at my work with wonder and feels; that is what motivates me to work with this material," says Rejani. >>

This recalls the process of skinning the human skin and displaying it on a wall (like we do in the case of animals).

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

This represents your ideas and words falling back on you with no possible effect. (Medium - jute, dark sand from Azheekal (coastal area in Kerala) mixed with clay, base with dry cow dung)

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

Sometimes her thoughts coincide with a particular material. She keeps a note of it in her mind and collects it later. It might be based on the memory an object recalls - a tangible objective correlative. Rejani remembers, “For instance the blanket always recalls the childhood memory of my maternal uncle who was in the military service. So the blanket is always associated with this memory and it becomes part of my work.”

It is interesting how the materials she chooses to verbalise have close association with a woman’s daily activities. Materials which remain in the margins and do not call forth attention, but when used deftly by the artist surprises the onlooker and shakes her/him into musing about the reality we tend to overlook.

This represents a concept where a woman is worshipped and at the same time harassed. It is connected with the ritualistic aspect of Kali pooja and can be related to how the women around us are being treated. (Medium - ash)

In the process, the material unexpectedly gains a different dimension too; especially when placed in an artistic space, unlike the spaces it is used in daily life. >>

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

This represents how women in the society are often controlled like cattles with nose strings of censorship, surveillance, duty etc.

Rejani's exhibition 'Lub-Dub' (held at Kerala Lalithalaka Academy Art Gallery (DH Hall), Ernakulam, Kochi in February 2022) provided a public space for discussing topics which are often buried in the female self. It traces her own responses to the world, specifically how the world sees a woman, expects her to carry herself and more importantly how she feels in such a world. Rejani recalls how many young female viewers were able to relate to her installations and personally confessed to her that they too had thought about the topics represented there and had formed opinions quite similar to hers.

The exhibition offered a venue for an open dialogue to discuss many questions within, and answers to which she was aware of but had never shared. "There is a certain way this world expects women to be. >>

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

But it should also be kept in mind that it is not just men but women too who are keen on moulding this “traditional" kind of women still. I too have been part of such a society earlier!” adds Rejani.

Rejani had to take a break from the art world for six years, and the experiences she gained in the process serves as the background to her work. Her work emanates from emotions and is an ever evolving process. It is never complete as she keeps on adding to the existing piece and says that she might keep doing it till the end of her time. She doesn’t aim to frame herself as an intellectual through her work, rather it is her experiences, who she is, which seeps to the surface. >>

This work represents the discus fish whose young one constantly feed on their mother’s body. This forces the viewer to rethink the conventional notions of motherhood.

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

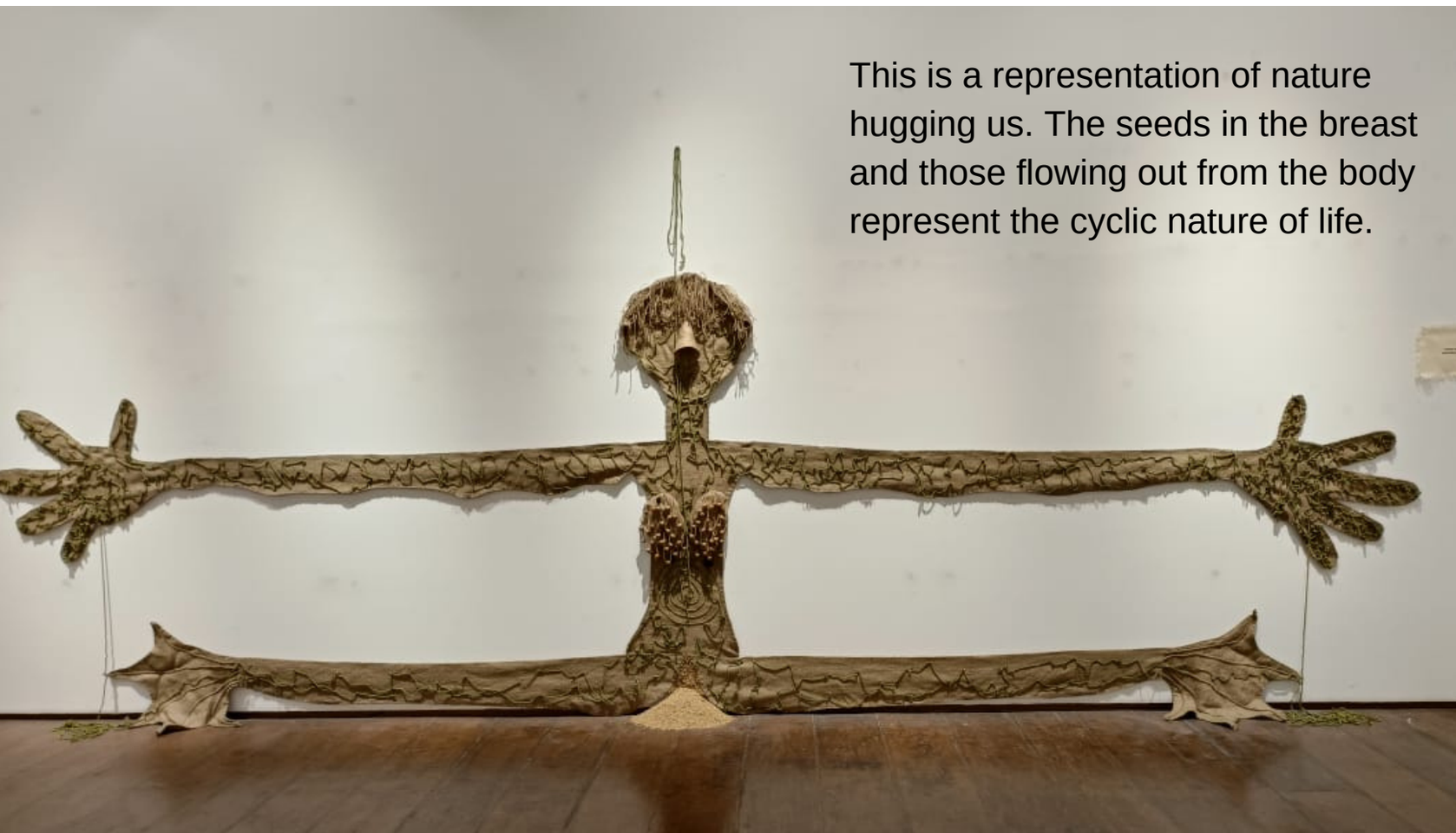
“Life is a mystery. You think it's logic which drives it but actually it's full of mysteries” muses Rejani.

Hailing from Trivandrum, this talented artist who is now settled in Kayamkulam feels that society in our state is distant from visual language.The best example she says is her own family especially the way they react to art. The young generation is not taught what it is and their knowledge is often limited to Raja Ravi Varma. They do not know about artists in Kerala except maybe Bose Krishnamachari. “Artists, therefore, must play a role in making it understandable and accessible to the public,” opines the artist. >>

These drawings talks about the concept of how your body would respond when air is blown into it.

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

The monster holding its breasts in its hand is an expression of childhood fears. It rouses fear with the huge wart-like projection from its skin, but the horns are not active. Surprisingly, it evokes a kind of vague fondness for the creature.It calls into question the notions of beauty.



This is a representation of nature hugging us. The seeds in the breast and those flowing out from the body represent the cyclic nature of life.

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

Rejani doesn't see art as a medium to express just her thoughts and feelings. Rather she is particular that it engages with her audience. This is evident from her opinions. "All my art has evolved from my emotions. "All my art has evolved from my emotions. But even when I say so I ask myself a few questions. >>

This and the cover page artworks are associated with my maternal grand aunt who was rumoured to be into black magic. She had a very mysterious room. We could find many unwanted objects collected by her inside the room. Some of the items she saw haunted young Rejani. This work talks about how she places it in the time of maturity. The question is whether it haunts you? This is also linked to the next exhibit which recalls African voodoo.

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

For instance 1) What is the audience reading from the exhibit? 2) Is the viewer able to connect to my thoughts and feelings from what has been represented? 3) Have I been able to successfully translate my thoughts into the art work?" >>

This portrays a way of looking at yourself by being distant from your body. The birds surrounding the exhibit stand for the self observing the self / the body from different angles.

Wings depict the freedom with which we can go anywhere, but also carries with it the art of viewing the world from an unexpected angle.

From Stasis to Metamorphosis

REJANI S. R

2002-2008 ~ MFA Sculpture, RLV College of Fine Arts, Tripunithura, she completed BFA Sculpture, in Ravi Varma College of Fine Arts, Mavelikkara. She had participated in many camps, exhibitions and workshops. Currently she is active in the field of art.

Art, according to Rejani, should be democratic. She often feels that artists talk about being democratic but prefers to be a minority. What gave her a sense of fulfilment was when people from all categories responded to her work at her exhibition “Lub-Dub”. “More than the intellectual aspect of what has been written about it – what the artist has meant - people responded visually to what had been exhibited. That was proof that through my work I'm able to satisfy people from various strata, not just the intellectuals. That is what matters the most!” muses the artist. <>

This talks abouts emotions. What would you feel if you stuck pieces of midrib of coconut into your eyes?

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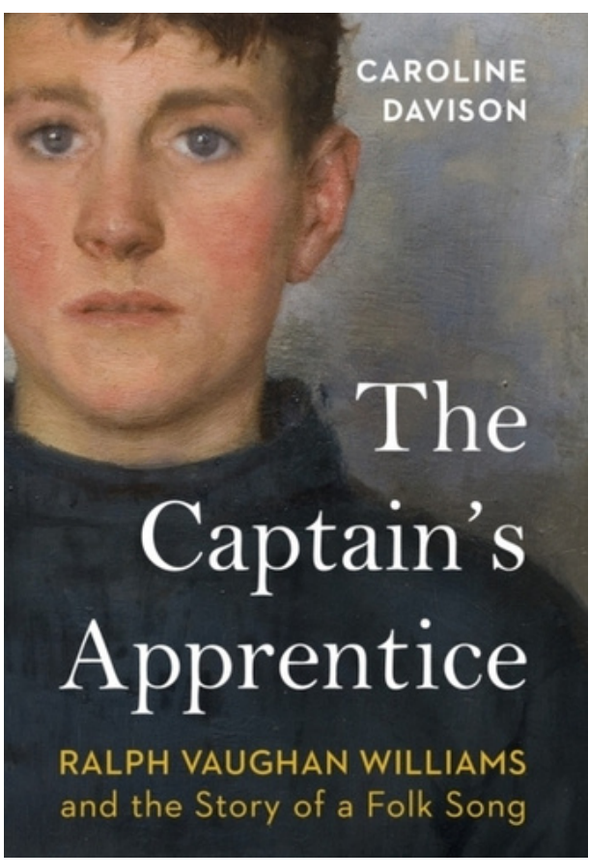
ABOUT THE BOOK

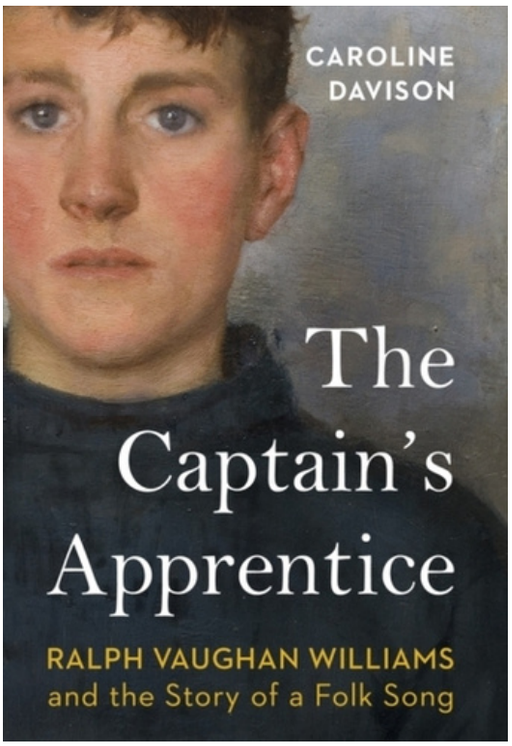
SOURCE:
TOPPING BOOKS, UK.



The Captain's Apprentice, a beautifully written exploration of the world of Edwardian folk music, and its influence on the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.

In January 1905 the young Vaughan Williams, not yet one of England's most famous composers, visited King's Lynn, Norfolk, to find folk songs 'from the mouths of the singers'. He had started collecting in earnest little more than a year before but was now obsessed with saving these indigenous tunes before they were lost forever. An old fisherman, James 'Duggie' Carter, performed 'The Captain's Apprentice', a brutal tale of torture sung to the most beautiful tune the young composer had ever heard.

The Captain's Apprentice is the story of how this mysterious song 'opened the door to an entirely new world of melody, harmony and feeling' for Vaughan Williams. With this transformational moment at its heart, the book traces the contrasting lives of the well-to-do composer and a forgotten King's Lynn cabin boy who died at sea, and brings fresh perspectives on Edwardian folk-song collectors, the singers and their songs. >>



ABOUT THE BOOK

While exploring her own connections to folk song, via a Hebridean ancestor, a Scottish ballad learnt as a child and memories of family sing-songs, the author makes the unexpected discovery that Vaughan Williams has been a hidden influence on her musical life from the beginning – an experience she shares with generations of twentieth-century British schoolchildren.

Before becoming a writer, Caroline Davison worked as a conservationist in the heritage sector for thirty years. Her publications include a novel, The Pleasure Garden, and a number of non-fiction essays. Caroline also writes and performs music and has been a singer in various bands and choirs since the age of seventeen. She lives and works in Norfolk. <>

By Leena Joshy Vas - Acrylic

Peacock and monsoons - it's time to dance - Ranthambore

July is the time when the Peacocks tries to impress the female and dances around. Keep your eyes open for this when you visit the jungles this monsoon. PC: SUDHIR SHIVARAM

Illikkalkallu

PC: NIZAM, KERALA EXPLORERS